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THAYER MEMORIAL EXHIBITION

IN the late autumn of this year the Museum plans to hold a memorial exhibition of the paintings of Abbott H. Thayer, who died May 29. A certain number of paintings by this gifted American artist will be borrowed from public and private collections where they are available, and it is hoped that this call will meet with the same generous response which has been given to the Museum enterprises in the past.

As a nucleus around which to build is the representation of Thayer's work in the Museum—the splendid view of Mt. Monadnock, the Young Woman, and a recently purchased Head of a Child which was exhibited at Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, as Portrait of Raphael Pumpelly. In it is seen Thayer's characteristic beauty of color and his sensitiveness to the mingled poetry and honesty of a fine-spirited child. It is neither pure idealism nor direct psychology, but a balanced admixture of the two.

According to George de Forest Brush, Thayer stands alone in his time in the expression of the countenance. Writing of the figures of women, those brave, wholesome young women, sometimes winged, which are Thayer's most personal contribution to art, Royal Cortissoz writes,

"Their charm is drawn from Olympian sources. Yet it is one of their finest traits that they stand with their feet unmistakably on the solid earth. . . . It is by character, by qualities of the soul, that they triumph, not through any dramatic or other significance derived from a specifically pictorial ingenuity."

Details of the exhibition will appear in a later number of the BULLETIN.

SWORD GUARDS AND FIREARMS LENT BY THE ARMOR SOCIETY

A SOCIETY has been recently organized in New York for the study of arms and armor. Since it brings together a large number of the American specialists in this field, we may well expect that its influence will presently be felt in developing a knowledge and an appreciation of its special field of art.

In one direction, it now furnishes us a loan exhibition in the armor gallery of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, made up of excellent examples from private collections: among them, in a special case, will appear early pistols, European and Oriental, which are instructive from many points of view—beauty of design, technical perfection, and originality of mechanism; in a second case the society exhibits a hundred Japanese sword guards, or tsuba, which show an extraordinary range in material, ornament, and execution. Of iron guards there are a score the earliest antedating the fourteenth century, the latest about a hundred years old. Some of these seem hardly of iron, since they are richly encrusted with gold in fanciful traceries or diapers (No. 69). Near them are guards of red copper, and of various alloys, including brasses and bronzes, several of which, in mixtures including gold and silver, take colors of great beauty under the highly developed processes of pickling which the Japanese developed.

As the visitor looks at these objects, he wonders at the manual dexterity of the Japanese sword decorators, their fertility of design, their aesthetic appreciation of proportion, their sense of lights, shadows,

and color, their interest in manifold themes. He may well feel that he is on the threshold of a whole domain, and an unfamiliar one, in the history of art. Let him but try to classify these tsuba before him, and he will find how complicated is his task. Most of us would not attempt it, but he who is thoughtful will long be haunted by the problem which he cannot solve: try as he may to distinguish clearly the groups of sword guards, he will ever find that his criteria "interlock" inextricably. Thus

guard in the present collection (No. 1). From simple perforations develop silhouetted pine trees (No. 9), blossoming prunus (No. 11), heraldic devices (Nos. 18, 29), even a splendid horse (No. 79): the most complicated of this series of perforated guards including "a hundred cherry flowers," multitudinous monkeys (No. 76), or supremely fretted Namban guards (Nos. 39, 40), Chinese in style, fine as lace—sometimes worked out or undercut to such a degree that elements in their design move



SWORD GUARD BY KANEIYÉ NI-DAI
ABOUT 1600

IN THE COLLECTION LENT BY THE ARMOR AND ARMS SOCIETY

he may try in vain to classify his guards according to their material, whether finished or roughened, whether perforated or plain, whether smooth, encrusted, or inlaid; or according to subjects; or, if he follows his task more thoroughly, even according to the "schools" of the artists who created them.

We have referred above to guards according to their material. We might have added in this category guards which develop enamels on metal, or lacquer on metal, or curious complicated layering of metals which reminds us of the delicate graining of woods. We should include even such material as leather, horn, ivory, wood, and jade. If we classified the guards as "perforated" and "solid," we find the simplest perforated type in an early

freely one upon another, each in its appointed sphere. Of solid guards some are encrusted in silver, gold, or alloys, in enamel (*shippo*) (No. 68), in mother-of-pearl (No. 67): others are overlaid or engraved in complicated designs of things and scenes dear to the Japanese. Some of these tsuba are treated boldly, some are marvels of minuteness, complicated in theme, and microscopic in detail—to a degree surprising and even disconcerting to a Western mind.

If one classifies sword guards by themes, or subjects, he will create numerous divisions, including heraldic, religious, *e.g.* in No. 42, inscribed with a Sanscrit prayer; in the field of daily life, or of its opposite, as episodes in sight-seeing, as in No. 96, which shows us a fisherman at Gifu with

his blazing cresset and his trained cormorant. Historical subjects are common; sometimes even humor crops out, as in guard No. 91, in which monkeys are gravely displaying and criticizing the work (*kakemono*)—religious subject, by the way—of an ancient painter. In many of the guards the hobby of the artist or of his patron is suggested: thus a *tsuba* showing carefully strung bows and crossed arrows was evidently prepared for an amateur in archery; a lute and a sword (No. 28) suggest a music-loving samurai; a Chinese picture in another *tsuba* was possibly copied from the favorite *kakemono* of some mild-mannered, gentlemanly collector—who in his heart (shame on this samurai!) cared less for his sword than for his pictures.

The present exhibition is noteworthy in more senses than one, and an inquiring visitor will be impressed with the fact that in New York alone there are many amateurs who appreciate in rare degree the delicacy and scope of this special phase of Japanese art. The objects will be on view from the fifteenth of June until the fifteenth of October. They are well worth seeing.

B. D.

THE WORK OF FLORENCE WYMAN IVINS: A CLASS ROOM EXHIBITION

THE work of Florence Wyman Ivins cannot be unknown to Museum visitors of recent years; for the poster advertising the *Story-Hours for Children* which has stood for several seasons in the Fifth Avenue Hall was designed by her, as were the covers of the *Children's Bulletin*. These have occasioned many expressions of delight and many queries as to the artist who executed them. An opportunity to know the notable character of the contribution that Mrs. Ivins has made to American art will be afforded at the Museum during the next few months in Class Room B, where an exhibition of a collection of her watercolor drawings, woodcuts, and drawings in black and white will be on view from July 15 through the month of October. Admirable in draughtsmanship and skilful

in design, these have a special charm of subject in that with a spontaneous gaiety of treatment they portray various episodes of childhood experience.

AN EXHIBITION OF WATER-COLORS

AN exhibition of the Museum collection of watercolors by Winslow Homer and John S. Sargent is always an interesting and delightful event. These are among the most admired and among the most worthy of admiration of any of the American works in the care of the Department of Paintings, and the lack of any proper space for keeping them permanently on exhibition only serves to sharpen the appreciation with which they are seen when the occasion is presented. In addition to the group by Homer and Sargent, the present exhibition contains watercolors and pastels by La Farge, Hassam, Sterner, Dougherty, Glackens, Marin, and McComas. On one of the end walls of the gallery has been hung a group of watercolors by William Blake and some of the British artists of the nineteenth century. Throughout the present summer the exhibition will remain on view in Gallery 25. The objects belonging to the Vanderbilt bequest which occupied this gallery during the winter have now been distributed in their various galleries—the portraits by Gainsborough and Reynolds going to Gallery 24, the paintings by Boucher and Greuze to Gallery 20, the Holbein portrait to Gallery 34, Rembrandt's *Noble Slav* and the other pictures of the Dutch school to Gallery 26, and the two masterpieces of French furniture of the Louis XVI period to Wing J, Room 11.

JAPANESE PRINTS ON EXHIBITION

THE exhibition of Japanese prints in Room H 11 has been changed; instead of the nineteenth-century *Surimono*s, Hiroshige landscapes with figures are shown. The set of views of famous tea houses forms a special feature, and the Japanese gardens and interiors will prove of interest.